THE HIGH PRIESTESSES

You've studied and been moved by the teachings of the Satanic Bible. You've watched enough Anton LaVey documentaries and pseudo-black masses on YouTube that your computer smells like candles and incense. Not only that, you've also just finished reading Napoleon Hill's 'Think And Grow Rich' and studied the careers of Kim Fowley, Berry Gordy and Lou Pearlman (the guy who created and backed '90s boy bands like *NSYNC and the Backstreet Boys). Your thoughts have turned to putting together the ultimate Satanic super-group. You can't go wrong including any of these Satanic Sisters and Hell's Belles

Words: Kevin Stewart-Panko

JINX DAWSON

(COVEN)

Let's begin where it all started. Not only were Coven the first overtly occult and deliberately Satanic rock band, they featured the haunting, operatic vocals of Jinx Dawson, who was the real deal. Raised in an artistic family who also participated in behind-closed-doors secret societies, Jinx studied classical voice training from an early age and was imbued in evil from the beginning. With her flowing floor-length gowns and flaxen locks, she led their ritualistic, psychedelic and progressive music. Not only that, but Jinx has been widely credited for being the first to use the throwing of the horns hand/finger salute – yes, pre-Dio – in praise of the dark lord.

ROSALIE CUNNINGHAM

(PURSON)

Taking a huge page of parchment from Coven's book is Purson. Featuring the throaty vocals and warm guitar riffs of Rosalie Cunningham, Purson play what they describe as 'progpsychgothfolkglampoprock'. This Big Smoke-based outfit not only make music that sounds like the devil and exhibits his/her impish and humorous side through Ouija boards and venom, but they also play proto '60s jammolas with songtitles like 'Leaning On A Bear'. Their debut 'The Circle And The Blue Door' is out now. If you want to go to Hell with a smile on your mug, let Rosalie and her charges lead the way.

Pic: ESTER SEGARRA

Pic: AL OVERDERIVE

F THE MOUTH OF SATAN

(THE DEVIL'S BLOOD)

Dutch occult/psychedelic rockers The Devil's Blood never quarelled a single moment about their devotion to the horned one. As of a couple months ago, however, the band split up, an announcement cryptically explained via a press release that was as terse as it was pretentious. Attention impresarios: Farida 'F. The Mouth of Satan' Lemouchi is a free agent and possibly looking for work. She was never one to say much to the press during her five-year tenure fronting the band, but it's not like she had to, with her visually striking, blood-soaked image and the evil sidelong glances she mastered.

LIZ BUCKINGHAM
(ELECTRIC WIZARD)

She may only be considered an honorary Brit in the eyes of this country's immigration and citizenship departments, but fuck it. As Slayer once said, 'Evil Has No Boundaries'. If you ever need a guitarist to ooze out the sludgiest, most molasses-paced rusty lawnmower blade riffs using a tone akin to swamp gas being lit on fire, Liz Buckingham should forever be your go-to. Her pedigree while playing in the colonies is unfuckwithable (13, Sourvein), as is her role as the settling force that seemingly straightened out Electric Wizard's post-Greening and Bagshaw collapsing clusterfuck. We're also betting Liz and her man Jus Oborn have enough of a collection of all the real and simulated black mass videos (on VHS, of course!) to keep you busy for weeks.

CHELSEA WOLFE

Even though she hails from realms outside the metal world, Sacramento's Chelsea Wolfe has resonated with the darker side of the musical world because of her inherent dark side. Tagged as 'drone metal art folk', the urban, witchy-looking Wolfe swims in a seemingly perpetual depressive mood and has used her breathy voice, weepy acoustic guitar and sullen piano playing to attract attention from Roadburn curators and attendees as well as those looking for a fireside feel to their dalliances with evil. Be careful: it's always the quiet ones you have to watch out for.

JESS
(JESS & THE ANCIENT ONES)

Looking like she just stepped out of a world cross-pollinated by her kindred spirit Jinx Dawson, master macramé artist Rita Huang and Aleister Crowley himself, Jess & The Ancient Ones command center stage attention for their brand of ritual magic, and chanteuse Jess leads the party like a succubus with the most awesome of siren songs. The Finns' music is majestic, up tempo psychedelia and Jess' pipes belie the commercial nature of her Ann and Nancy Wilson-meets-Janis Joplin influences, to sound like she was next in line behind Robert Johnson at the crossroads with her soul and a hastily pre-arranged contract in hand.

SERA TIMMS & KELLY JOHNSTON
(IDES OF GEMINI)

While most of us are cheating Carpal Tunnel Syndrome on a daily basis to bring you the glossy slice of metallic literature you're currently spilling beer on, the focus on Ides Of Gemini has been one of our own – the inimitable J. Bennett – making the move from critic to those who get criticised. However, the band was actually designed by J. to revolve around the sultry, airy voice of vocalist/bassist Sera Timms. Additionally, the spacious and ambient tub thumping of Kelly Johnston acts as primitive foil to the charred, slow motion post-punk apocalypse on their 'Constantinople' debut. The trio may not be howling on about Satan, but Sera's voice is probably scaring someone, somewhere as you read this.

SHANDRA FREDRICK
(DEMON LUNG)

Recently signing on Candlelight's dotted line, Demon Lung hail from that edge of the universe where the occult, Paganism, a love of and respect for 4:20 friendly herb and gothic-looking women fronting hirsute stoner sludge all collide in the name of metal. Part of what sets vocalist Shandra Fredrick and her bandmates apart from the pack is that Demon Lung hail from Las Vegas, the epicentre of American vice. Here, the hedonism that surrounds Shandra in the city of sanctioned sin is represented through her moody and earthy voice. They have a demo available, but are working on their debut for Candlelight that promises to put listeners in the mood. For what? That's entirely your call, but whatever Demon Lung are doing isn't going to stay in Vegas much longer.

ALIA O'BRIEN
(BLOOD CEREMONY)

Ever since Jethro Tull beat out Metallica for the Grammy's inaugural metal award in 1988, metal has had a hate-on for the flute. And why not? As an instrument, it's symbolic of old fogies afraid to live anywhere but behind the times. And Hell, you can't even plug the damned thing into a distortion pedal! But played properly and in the right context, as in the way Alia O'Brien of Toronto's Blood Ceremony does, the flute can sound as nefarious as anything else. Alia, also via her beguiling organ playing and smoky vocals, it would seem, has been sent to this mortal coil to play the piper, drawing in and corrupting indie rock hipsters and non-believing metalheads. We thank her for her shadowy talents and presence.

JEX THOTH
(SABBATH ASSEMBLY)

Her name alone is like pure evil tumbling off the lips of those who dare to speak it. Say 'Jex Thoth' when Satan's in the house and it tents his trousers. Considering that Jex Thoth (aka Jessica Bowen) fronts a psychedelic doom band obsessed with mythology, ancient religions, Paganism and all the stuff that wakes Hollywood's living dead, this hardly comes as a surprise . For Jex/Jessica, exploration of the world beneath our world is what matters, and doing so while crooning music that would have had her burned at the stake in a more superstitious age is where it's at.